Material used in rail coaches

1432. SHRI RAJU PARMAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that material used to build a rail coach is tested and accepted on its fire retardant capabilities;

(b) if so, what are the reasons that three coaches of Frontier Mail were engulfed within fifteen minutes of fire in May, 2003; and

(c) whether Government have inquired into the circumstances, which led to the fire of three coaches, and if so, the complete details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Commissioner of Railway Safety (CRS), North Eastern Circle is conducting statutory enquiry of Frontier Mail Fire mishap. Final report of enquiry is awaited. As per CRS/NE Circle's preliminary report, cause of fire can be ascertained only after the State Forensic Science Laboratory Chandigarh's report is received.

Rear view mirrors in Locomotives

1433. SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMAD KHAN (DURRU): Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether rear view mirrors have been provided in all electric as well as diesel locomotives of the Indian Railways in order to enable the engine driver to determine the positions of the coaches/ wagons beyond the engine;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) steps contemplated by Government to provide such rear view mirrors in every engine so that incidents like fire which engulfed the three coaches of Amritsar bound Frontier Mail killing 36 passengers recently could have been noticed by the engine driver?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) The efficacy of suitable type of rear view mirrors for locos has been evaluated recently and Railways have been directed to provide them on locomotives.

MoU between railtel and BSNL

1434. SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN:
SHRI GAYA SINGH:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a Memorandum of undertaking (MoU) has been signed between the Rail Tel Corporation of India (Rail Tel) and Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd. (BSNL) for sharing bandwidth and other telecommunications infrastructure; and

(b) if so, the details of the communication network proposed to be established with this agreement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Memorandum of Undertaking (MoU) signed between Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) and Rail Tel Corporation of India Limited (Rail Tel) relates to exploring new business opportunities to take advantage of the changing scenario in the country in telecommunication field. BSNL & Rail Tel have agreed to utilise their synergies, infrastructure and services for this purpose. There is no proposal, as such, to establish any new communication network. BSNL, however, may use Rail Tel's OFC infrastructure dropped at stations for providing rural telephony and continuous coverage of their Cell One mobile phones along the track. BSNL may also offer last mile and interconnection to Rail Tel for their various requirements including International Long Distance (ILD) & National Long Distance (NLD) operations.